

VERIFICATION

- PURPOSE:** This instruction sets policy regarding the verification process.
- SCOPE:** School food authorities participating in the National School Lunch and/or School Breakfast Program.
- DEFINITION:** The most current guidance provided to your school corporation is included in the August 1991 Eligibility Guidance for School Meals sent to the superintendent's office in 1991. The superintendent's office should have provided copies of this material to those individuals responsible for approval/ verification of the applications. Pages 41-59 of this guidance outlines the process and include sample forms.

Verification is confirmation of eligibility or confirmation that the child is included in a currently certified food stamp household or AFDC assistance unit.

Verification can begin after the applications have been approved and **MUST** be completed by December 15 of each school year. The required minimum sample size to verify is based on the number of approved **applications** (pieces of paper, not children) on file on October 31.

School corporations participating in the direct certification program do not include the children who are eligible based on direct certification in the figures used for verification. Children approved based on direct certification require no verification; however, SFA's using direct certification would still verify the appropriate number of households that were approved based on a completed Application for Free/Reduced Price Meals.

ALL HOUSEHOLDS SELECTED FOR VERIFICATION MUST BE NOTIFIED IN WRITING OF THEIR SELECTION. When households have been selected and notified, the verification process is considered to be complete only when all households are notified in writing of one of the following:

- confirmation of income/benefits
- changed to a higher level of benefit
- a letter of adverse action has been sent informing the household that benefits will be reduced or terminated

The only exception to the above is when school food authorities choose to verify income at the time of application. In this instance applications on file on/or before October 31 must be verified, while applications received after the October 31 date may be verified at the discretion of the SFA. The rationale for this exemption is that an SFA using verification at the time of application may have an extremely large number of applications to verify. USDA further states that the number of applications approved after October 31 each school year is minimal and, therefore, its exemption will have a minimal effect on the verification process. We do not encourage SFAs to elect to verify at the time of application as it is extremely labor intensive and an unnecessary paperwork burden on your school's personnel.

Refer to Policy 88-11 for the following documents:

Letter to Parents, Determination of Eligibility, Review of Verification Documentation, and Notice of Adverse Action.

In any circumstance where the SFA has reason to question the information provided on an application, the application must first be approved at face value, then must be verified for cause.

Once the verification process has been completed, the verification summary should be completed and kept on file. The department will review the summary as part of the regular review process. If you will not be able to complete the verification process, a request for extension should be completed and returned by December 1 to the State Agency.

SOURCE: ELIGIBILITY GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL MEALS, FNS 274, AUGUST 1991 AND APRIL 8, 1993, LETTER FROM THERESA E. BOWMAN, REGIONAL DIRECTOR, CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE MIDWEST REGION.